

WELLINGTON NEW STATION AND YARDS, TAWA FLAT DEVIATION, AND JOHNSONVILLE SECTION.—Work upon the new Wellington Station since the contract was let has proceeded rapidly, and the construction of supplementary buildings and the general layout of the yard are well in hand. An agreement has been reached with the Wellington City Council in connection with the altered alignment of Bunny Street and the general treatment of the road and railway frontages in that locality which involved exchanges of land for the purpose of providing suitable approaches to the new station. It is anticipated that the new station and yards will be completed and available for use by 1st April, 1937. Concurrent with this progressive development of railway interests at Wellington there will be involved the transfer to the Tawa Flat deviation of all traffic in and out of Wellington via the Manawatu line. The deviation is already being utilized for through goods traffic.

The Wellington–Tawa Flat deviation is being constructed primarily for the purpose of avoiding the difficulties associated with the movement of traffic over the heavy grades on the existing line, which will not be required for through traffic when the new line is completed. The Board recognizes the necessity for the continuance of a satisfactory method of transport between Wellington and Johnsonville, and has been negotiating accordingly with the Wellington City Council for the disposal of such portion of the existing railway facilities as the Council may desire to take over in the interests of its ratepayers who are served by the present line. Representations have, however, been made by representative bodies urging the continued operation of the line as an integral part of the railway system and the replacement of the present steam services by multiple electric units. The revenue derived from the existing passenger business between Johnsonville and Wellington is not sufficient to justify the continuance of a service by rail, and the Board requires some definite assurance of an increased financial return before committing itself to either a continuation of the present steam services or the provision of electric units. The Board is accordingly hopeful that the district and associated interests will, by their combined efforts, justify the retention of the line and the proposal to electrify it, and so enable the Board to reach a decision that will be satisfactory to all interests.

LEVEL CROSSINGS.—The Board has consistently held to the policy endorsed by the highest Courts here and elsewhere that the problem arising from the increasing volume of road traffic over level crossings following the wide use of mechanically propelled road units is primarily one for the road authorities and road-users. This view has also been upheld by the British Ministry of Transport.

Whilst following this policy, the Board has always been anxious to assist in a practical way in a solution of the problem that would be satisfactory to all the interests concerned. Conferences have accordingly taken place on behalf of the Main Highways Board, the Unemployment Board, and the Government Railways Board, and a programme of level-crossing elimination involving an expenditure of £120,000 per annum (a total of £360,000 for a three-yearly period) has been decided upon and approved by the Government.

The Board will also make financial provision for the erection of a certain number of level crossing warning-devices each year at those crossings where, in the Board's opinion, the circumstances of the traffic justify such a course and the local authorities are agreeable to assist.

WORKSHOPS.—The Board has under its control four main railway workshops situate respectively at Otahuhu (Auckland), Woburn (Wellington), Addington (Canterbury), and Hillside (Otago). The number of employees in the respective workshops at the time of compiling this report is as follows:—

Otahuhu	860
Woburn	1,400
Addington	700
Hillside	750
Total	3,710

The Board pays periodical visits of inspection to the workshops, and as a result of these visits is pleased to report that the shops are efficiently staffed and excellently equipped. By far the greater portion of the Board's requirements in railway equipment, plant, and rolling-stock generally is manufactured or assembled at one or other of the workshops.

Six K class locomotives were completed during the year, making a total of 18 of this type now passed into traffic.

Six new boilers were built for replacement purposes, while 4 were under construction at the end of the financial year.

As at 31st March, 1935, there were 593 locomotives in service—577 steam, 11 electric, and 5 electric-battery shunting engines.

As bearing upon the work and output of the shops it is noted that the tractive effort of the locomotives in service during the year compared with the two previous years is as follows:—

	1935.	1934.	1933.
Number of locomotives in service	593	605	626
Total tractive power in pounds	10,685,229	10,823,029	10,882,459
Average tractive power per locomotive in pounds	18,172	17,889	17,384